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## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR 1897

The attention of the members of the Corporation is invited, in the first instance, to the foregoing financial statement. From this and the facts recorded below it will be seen that the progress of the Museum has been steady, and its expansion during the past year in some respects unprecedented.

The educational importance and functions of the institution are now universally recognized. The Trustees have left nothing undone, within the means at their disposal, to extend its usefulness and render its collections accessible and available for purposes of self-culture, instruction, and study, not only to the public of New York, but to scholars and students throughout the country.

Ever since its removal to the present quarters, the Museum has been closed for a fortnight twice a year, in order that new acquisitions might be placed on exhibition, and for general cleaning and repairs. Nevertheless, the total number of our visitors has always exceeded that of the visitors to any other museum in the country. During the past year the number, as recorded by the turnstile-registers, was 555,769, an increase over the preceding year of 52,453. Owing to the occurrence of public holidays on Monday or Friday, admission-fees were charged on only ninety days during the year; yet the receipts from this source were \$4,419.50, indicating a daily average of one hundred and ninety-six paying visitors.

Two hundred and forty-two persons received permits to copy in the various departments.

Numerous classes from out-of-town colleges and public and private schools have been admitted free when arriving on pay-days. A marked increase is observed in this class of visitors during recent years.

The customary winter courses of lectures on art and archæology, given in co-operation with Columbia University,

have become so popular and the attendance so large that the lecture-room can no longer accommodate all who desire to attend. It is proposed to provide larger quarters in the new wing now under construction.

Numerous complaints having been addressed to the Director, calling attention to the annoyance occasioned both lecturer and audience by the arrival of new-comers at all stages of the proceedings, the matter was laid before the audience and left to its determination. It was decided unanimously that the doors of the lecture-room should be closed five minutes after the commencement of the lecture.

The season was opened in December with a course on Renaissance Painting, by Mr. Edwin H. Blashfield. The January lectures were delivered by Mr. Louis Fagan, for twenty-seven years an officer of the British Museum. Besides the four lectures by Mr. Fagan on Saturdays under the joint auspices of the Museum and Columbia University, the Museum provided independently for an additional course of four lectures on Tuesdays, all of which were attended with unabated interest.

For the past few years the annual budget has included a small sum set apart for the acquisition of objects of art. By a judicious use of these funds, and by being constantly on the lookout for exceptional opportunities, the Trustees have succeeded in making the Department of Classical Antiquities equal to that of any museum in the country. On the other hand, the Department of Paintings cannot, under the present conditions, continue to grow as rapidly as in the past ten years. There is a limit to private benefactions. In Europe, notwithstanding the fact that private collections of paintings, which by gift or bequest may at any time be transferred to the public, represent the accumulations of centuries, government aid is constantly extended to museums for desirable additions to their galleries. Still less in this country, where private collections are as yet few in number and necessarily of recent formation, can our public institutions, if they are to continue active and influential, depend

for the increase of their collections exclusively upon casual gifts and bequests. We need works of the highest class, and when such are offered for sale, whether in the auction-rooms of this city or abroad, there should be money available to enable us to secure them for the Museum. To this end a permanent and liberal endowment is absolutely necessary.

During the nineteen years the Trustees have occupied the present building, they have been obliged to repair it at their own expense. This was not intended when the building was leased from the city, a clause in the lease stating expressly that the Park Commissioners "will keep said building from time to time in repair." The Trustees requested the Park Department to repair the building repeatedly at the end of each year from 1880 to 1883, and several times subsequently, but the answer has always been the same; their budget contained no such appropriation, consequently the Department had no funds available for the purpose. The repairs being imperative, the Trustees were compelled to make them at their own expense.

The building and grounds occupied by the Metropolitan Museum of Art belong to the city, which should take care of the property and keep it in repair. Architects estimate the annual expense of keeping a large building in repair at from one to two per cent of its original cost, but when a building has so wide an expanse of glass roof as has ours, the annual cost of its repair is estimated at from two to three per cent. Since 1879 the Trustees have expended over ninety thousand dollars from their own funds in making only such repairs as were absolutely necessary. They have decided that hereafter they will devote no more money to this object. The Commissioners of the Park Department must in the future include in their annual estimates a sum sufficient to keep the Museum building in proper repair or become responsible to the people for its gradual decay.

During the past summer the excavations for the foundations of the new wing were completed, and on September 8 the Commissioners approved the architect's specifications

for its construction. Bids were called for as required by law, on November 22 they were opened, and the contracts were awarded on December 31, 1897.

The collections of the Museum have been enriched and enlarged in many directions. A detailed list of gifts and bequests received during the year 1897 will be found in another part of this report.

The number of books in the Library on the thirty-first day of December 1897 was as follows:

Bound volumes.....	5233
Portfolios.....	150
Unbound volumes, Reports, Catalogues and Pamphlets.....	311

The additions to the Library during the past year have been as follows:

By purchase.....	192 volumes.
From the former Art Schools....	98 “
By presentation.....	122 “

including gifts from Dr. William R. Arnold, Mr. Samuel P. Avery, Mr. Charles Balliard, the Marquis de Biron, Count G. Toesca di Castellazzo, General L. P. di Cesnola, Dr. J. Ackerman Coles, Major C. G. Davis, Mr. A. Donatis, Dr. E. T. Hamy (through the Duc de Loubat), the Hon. Henry Hilton, Mr. D. O. Mills, Mr. W. L. Ormsby, Mr. George Petit, Mr. Thomas Stewardson, Dr. Joseph Wiener, and the Earl of Yarborough.

A steady increase is exhibited in the number of art students and other visitors who have used the Library during the past year.

Cards of admission to the Library may be obtained by applying to the director of the Museum or to the assistant librarian, as heretofore.

New York, January 31, 1898.

By order,

HENRY G. MARQUAND,

L. P. DI CESNOLA,

*Secretary.*

*President.*